

REELFOOT LAKE STATE NATURAL AREA

CLASS I SCENIC-RECREATIONAL STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY	Lake, Obion	ACREAGE	18,000
7.5' QUADRANGLE	Tiptonville, Hornbeak, Samburg, Ridgely	OWNERSHIP	State of Tennessee
PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE	Mississippi Floodplain	YEAR DESIGNATED	1973

DESCRIPTION

Reelfoot Lake is a 18,000- acre natural area located in Lake and Obion Counties in northwest Tennessee. Reelfoot Lake was created by a series of violent New Madrid fault zone earthquakes in the winter of 1811-1812. The lake and surrounding forests attract a large diversity of wintering and breeding populations of waterfowl, and boasts of a significant population of wintering bald eagles. Reelfoot is also recognized by the United States Department of Interior as a National Natural Landmark. It is one of only fourteen National Natural Landmarks in Tennessee. These landmarks are recognized as the country's best remaining examples of major biotic communities and geologic features.

The natural area includes about 10,900 acres of open water and marshes, and about 7,100 acres of bottomland hardwood forests and cypress dominated bottoms and sloughs. Much of the open lake habitat and forested habitats intergrade creating transitional zones teeming with fish, reptiles, amphibians, other wildlife, and emergent vegetation. Reelfoot offers opportunities for outdoor recreational activities such as wildlife viewing, bird watching, fishing, hunting, and hiking. It is popular winter destination for people interested in observing bald eagles.

The contiguous area within Reelfoot Lake State Natural Area and Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge is home to over 34 species of rare or endangered plants or animals. There are at least 14 rare bird species benefiting from this large aquatic/terrestrial landscape. These include the bald eagle, Swainson's warbler, peregrine falcon, and Mississippi kite. There are also 12 rare plant species including copper iris (*Iris fulva*), featherfoil (*Hottonia inflata*), and yellow water-crowsfoot (*Ranunculus longirostris*) found in the seasonally flooded sloughs and bottoms surrounding the lake. There are eight rare species of animals including mammals, amphibians, and invertebrates protected at Reelfoot Lake. The diversity of habitat and the large scale and continuity of the landscape offer a significant refugium for all types of wildlife that are migrating through or inhabiting this Mississippi River floodplain.

SITE MANAGEMENT

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, 200 Lowell Thomas Drive, Jackson, TN 38301, phone (731) 423-5725. Division of Natural Heritage, 401 Church St, 14th Floor L&C Tower, Nashville, TN 37243-0447, phone (615) 532-0431.

PUBLIC ACCESS

Public access is allowed; trails, boat ramps, and parking is provided. Please contact the visitor center at Reelfoot Lake State Park for additional information (901) 253-7756.

DIRECTIONS:

To the Reelfoot Lake State Park Visitors Center: From Dyersburg, take State Hwy 78 north to Tiptonville and turn right (east) onto State Hwy. 21 until you reach the visitor center on the left.